

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 and 9-39 are pending, with claims 1, 25 and 38 being independent. Claims 1-7, 9-24, 38 and 39 have been withdrawn, leaving claims 25-37 under consideration. Claims 34 and 36 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced.

Claims 34 and 36 were rejected under section 112, second paragraph. Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection in view of the amendment of claims 34 and 36 to eliminate "approximately".

Claim 25 is directed to a method of reinforcing a fuse. The method includes providing an electrical assembly that includes two electrical contacts accessible from an exterior of a fuse and a fuse element in contact with the two electrical contacts, and surrounding at least a portion of the electrical assembly by a pre-formed tubular support structure. After surrounding at least a portion of the electrical assembly by the pre-formed tubular support structure, a reinforcing structure is applied over the pre-formed tubular support structure and in contact with at least a portion of the electrical assembly. The reinforcing structure includes a fiber matrix that includes fibers pre-impregnated with a resin.

Claims 25, 31-33 and 35 have been rejected as being anticipated by Tobin (U.S. Patent No. 4,349,803). Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection because Tobin does not describe or suggest (1) surrounding at least a portion of an electrical assembly that includes two electrical contacts **and a fuse element** by a pre-formed tubular support structure or (2) applying a reinforcing structure **that includes a fiber matrix** over the pre-formed tubular support structure.

The rejection indicates that the method of claim 25 is inherent in the fuse tube structure of Tobin. Applicant strongly disagrees. Indeed, Tobin, at col. 24, lines 24-60, explicitly describes a process for forming the fuse tube that is completely different from the method recited in claim 25. In particular, Tobin's method involves forming a cylinder 50 of a reinforcing material, such as woven fiberglass cloth, and placing the cylinder in a mold. Thereafter, an inner portion 30 and an outer portion 40 are formed with the cylinder 50 between them by injecting a material such as an epoxy resin into the mold. Tobin also indicates that metallic end ferrules 14

and 16 may be integrally attached to the fuse tube structure by engaging them with the cylinder 50 before forming the portions 30 and 40.

Tobin does not contemplate including a fusible element between the ferrules during formation of the fuse tube structure. Accordingly, Tobin does not provide an electrical assembly such as is required by claim 25.

In addition, at best, the only portion of Tobin's fuse tube structure that could be argued to correspond to the pre-formed tubular support structure is the cylinder 50. However, even assuming for sake of argument that the cylinder 50 corresponds to the recited tubular support structure, this is the only aspect of Tobin's fuse tube that includes a fiber matrix. Accordingly, Tobin could in no way be said to be applying a reinforcing structure that includes a fiber matrix over the tubular support structure (i.e., the cylinder 50).

For at least these reasons, the rejection of claim 25 and its dependent claims should be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 34 and 36 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Tobin. Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection for the reason discussed above with respect to claim 25.

Dependent claims 27-30 and 37 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Tobin in view of Healey (U.S. Patent No. 3,970,709), and dependent claim 26 has been rejected as being unpatentable over Tobin in view of Schmunk (U.S. Patent No. 4,028,656). Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections because neither Healey, which is cited as showing the use of a rolling operation, a wrapping operation, or a circumferential application when applying a matrix; Schmunk, which is cited as showing a heat shrink structure; nor any combination of the two remedies the failure of Tobin to describe or suggest the subject matter of claim 25.

Applicant submits that all claims are in condition for allowance.

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The fee in the amount of \$120 in payment of the one-month extension fee is being paid concurrently herewith on the Electronic Filing System (EFS) by way of Deposit Account authorization. Please apply any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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